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-----FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-----

MAYOR PEREZ CALLS ON GOVERNOR TO ASSIST IN FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM UPGRADE

(October 20, 2005)--- In the wake of the recent deluge of rain, and as Hartford braces for another possible downpour this weekend, Mayor Eddie Perez has formally requested the state's assistance with \$30 million in funding to help upgrade and maintain the City's Flood Control System.

Mayor Perez writes that Hartford's Flood Control System "protects key facilities such as the MDC Sewage Treatment Plant, State Armory, Convention Center, State Capitol, and many Downtown businesses from being submerged or isolated by flooding and potentially helps avoid businesses employing over 120,000 state residents from being disrupted."

The Flood Control System was designed and constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers after the Great Floods of 1936 and 1938 in Hartford. The 7.4 miles of dike and six pump stations were built to withstand what engineers call "the type of storm that would happen every 500 years."

Mayor Perez says, "The system now faces some financial challenges. Though the federal government primarily paid for construction, the city pays for all annual maintenance, repairs and operation of a system that in some places are 60-years-old and becoming more expensive to maintain."

During a deluge over the weekend (what is already known as the wettest October on record), the North Meadows and South Meadows pump stations could not initially keep up with the inflow of water. However, luckily, the almost 50-year-old pump engines kept running and we avoided any major flooding problem. Mayor Perez points out to the Governor in his letter, that is an example of why state funding is needed for consistent maintenance improvements.

Mayor Perez wants to reassure residents that the Flood Control System is fully operational and capable of protecting state facilities, hospitals, homes, and businesses. However, \$30 million is needed over the next five years to keep up our high safety standard.